

SCHOOL BASED PHYSICAL THERAPY (PT)

FACT SHEET

The following fact sheet provides general information for parents, physicians, and others on the topic of educational physical therapy. Please check with your school district for additional information.

✓ **What is school-based physical therapy?**

- A related service in **special education** that could include the assessment, consultation, and/or treatment of students whose disability or developmental delay **interferes with their ability to learn** and their functional performance in the areas of physical disability, bodily malfunction and pain, injury, manipulation, positioning, mobility, sensory processing, and any bodily or mental conditions.

✓ **Who determines school-based physical therapy eligibility?**

- The school team, including the parent, and school-based PT. The student must first be eligible for special education to be considered for school-based physical therapy.

✓ **Can a physician order school-based physical therapy?**

- The physician can recommend PT to the family and school, **but the school team makes the final decision** on whether PT will be provided.

✓ **Who provides PT at school?**

- A licensed physical therapist and/or therapy assistant hired or contracted by the school.

✓ **What is the difference between school-based and non-school-based physical therapy?**

- Non-school-based PT is identified by the medical team based upon the medical condition. School-based PT is a part of the student's special education and addresses functional needs that are necessary for the student to participate in the educational environment. **It must be educationally relevant.**

✓ **Who pays for school-based physical therapy?**

- If a student is found to be eligible by the school team for PT, the school pays for the service. Medicaid allows districts to bill for PT services for special education eligible students with parent consent. **Non-school-based PT is the responsibility of the parents.**

For more information, contact your school district or go to www.opi.mt.gov.

Thank You

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